Masha And The Bear

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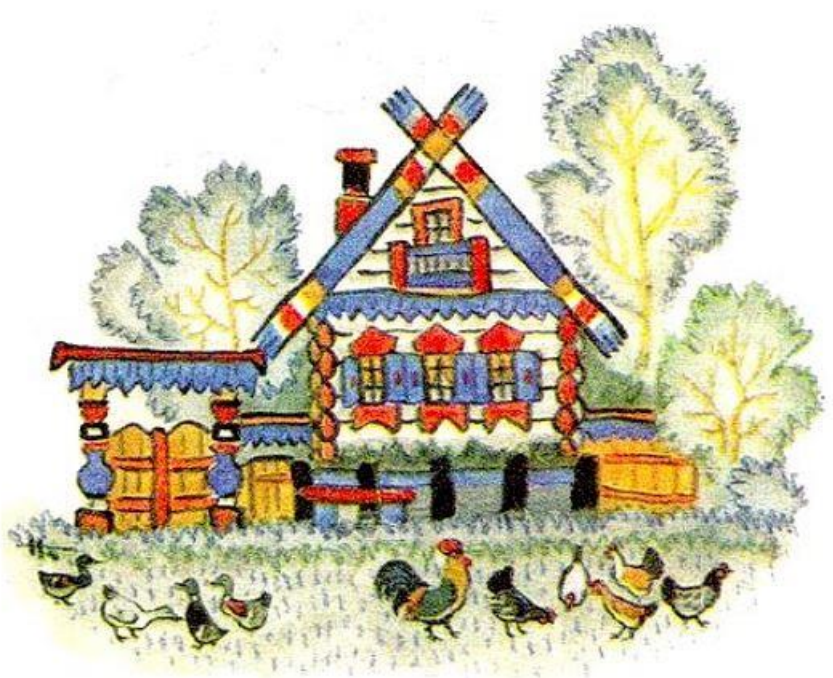
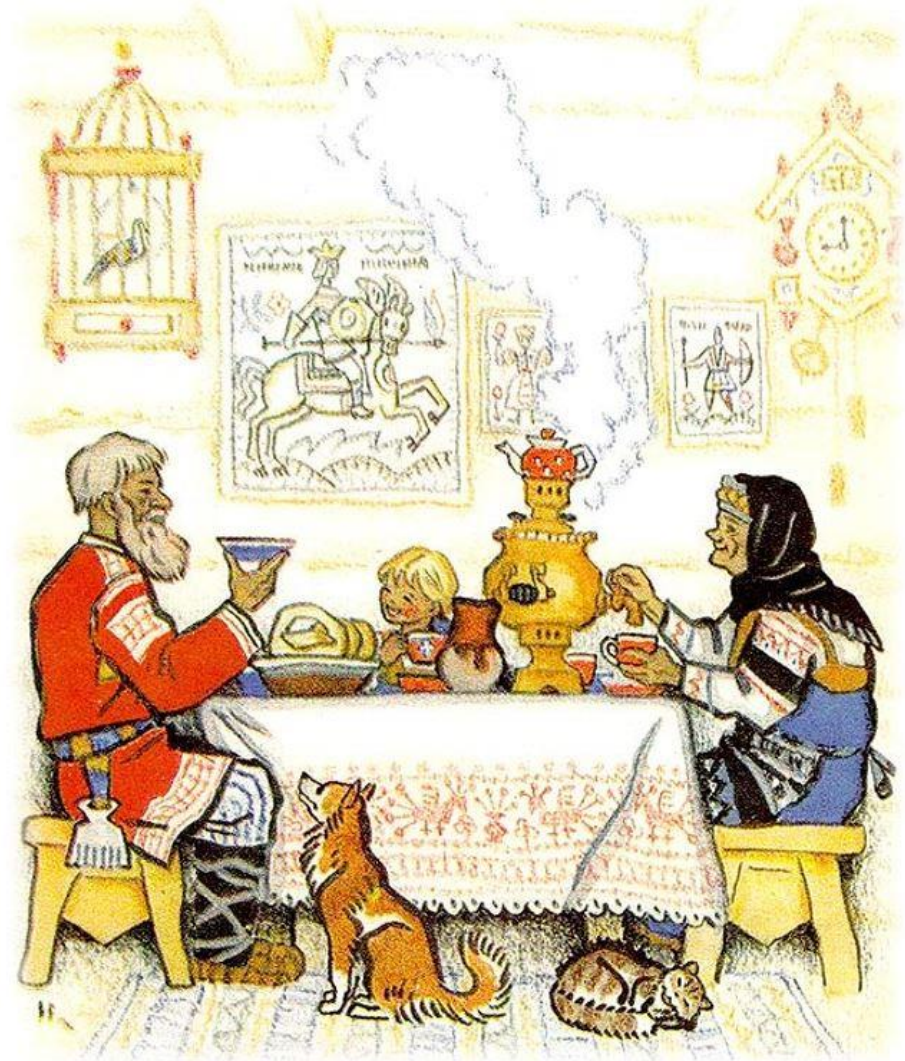
Russian Folk Tale



Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman who had a granddaughter named Masha.

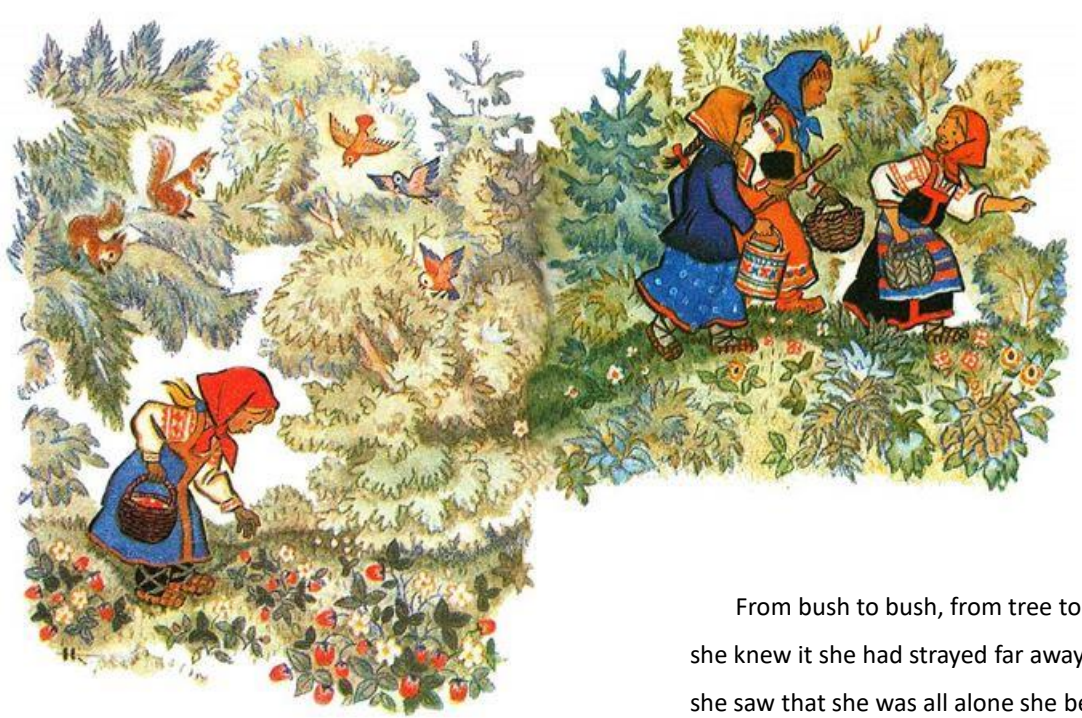


One day some friends of Masha's decided to go to the forest to gather mushrooms and berries and they came to Masha's house to ask her to go with them.

"Please, Grandma and Grandpa," said Masha, "do let me go to the forest."

"You may go, but see that you keep close to the others and don't lose sight of them or you might get lost," the two old people replied.

Masha and her friends came to the forest and began to hunt for mushrooms and berries.



From bush to bush, from tree to tree went Masha, and before she knew it she had strayed far away from her friends. When at last she saw that she was all alone she began to halloo and call to them, but her friends did not hear her and made no answer.

Masha went here and she went there, she walked all over the forest, but she could not find her way and was quite lost.

By and by she came to the wildest and thickest part of the forest, and there before her she saw a little hut. Masha knocked on the door, but there was no reply. So she gave the door a push, and lo! the door opened.

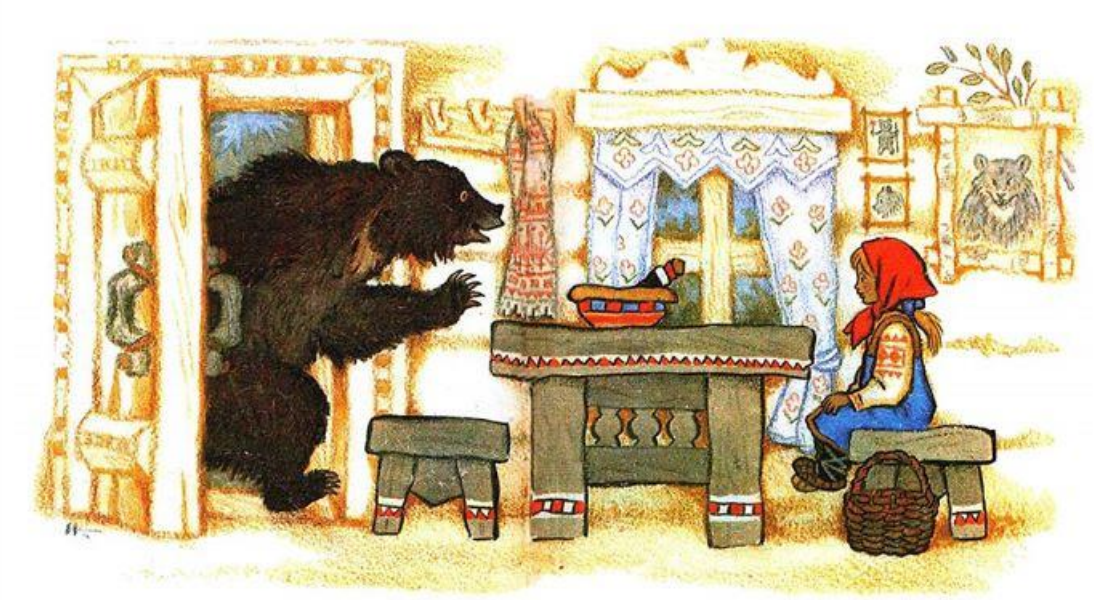
Masha came into the hut and sat down on a bench by the window. She sat there and she thought:

“I wonder who lives in this hut? Why is no one here?”

Now in that hut there lived a great, big Bear. Only he was out walking in the forest just then.

It was evening by the time he came home, and when he saw Masha he was very pleased.

“Aha,” said he, “now I’ll never let you go! You will live in my house as meek as a mouse, and you’ll cook my breakfast and my dinner too, and be my servant faithful and true.”



Masha sorrowed and grieved for a time, but it could not be helped, and so she stayed with the Bear and kept house for him.

Every morning the Bear would go to the forest for the day and, before leaving, he would tell Masha to stay in the hut and wait for him.

“You must never go out when I am away,” he would say. “If you do, I’ll catch you and eat you up!”

So Masha set to thinking how to run away from the Bear. All around was the forest, and there was no one to ask which way to go.

Masha thought and thought till at last she knew what to do.

That day, when the Bear came back from the forest, Masha said to him:

“Bear, Bear, do let me go to my village for a day. I want to take something good to eat to Grandma and Grandpa.”

“No, that won’t do at all,” said the Bear. “You’ll get lost in the forest. Give me whatever it is you want them to have, and I’ll take it to them myself. ”

Now that was all Masha wanted!

She baked some pies, put them on a plate, and, getting out a hamper, said to the Bear:

“I’ll put the pies in the hamper, and you can take it to Grandma and Grandpa. But mind, you’re not to open the hamper on the way and you’re not to eat the pies. I’m going to climb an oak-tree and I’ll be sitting there and watching you!”

“Very well, give me the hamper,” the Bear replied.

“Go out on the porch, first, and see if it isn’t raining,” Masha said.

The Bear went out on the porch, and Masha at once crawled into the hamper and put the plate of pies on her head.

The Bear came in, and there was the hamper all ready for him. So he put it on his back and set off for the village.

Tramp-tramp went the Bear amid the spruce-trees, clumpety-clump went he amid the birch-trees; up hill and down dale ran his long, winding trail, on and on he walked without a stop till at last he was tired and fit to drop.

“If I don’t rest my bones

I think I will die,

So, I’ll sit on a stump

And eat a pie!”

said the Bear.

But Masha called out from the hamper:

“I see you! I see you!

Don’t sit on the stump

And don’t eat my pie,

But take it to Grandma

And Grandpa, say I!”

“Dear me, what sharp eyes Masha has,” said the Bear. “She sees everything!”

He picked up the hamper and went on.

He walked and he walked till he could not walk any more. So he stopped and said:

“If I don’t rest my bones

I think I will die,

So, I’ll sit on a stump

And eat a pie!”

But Masha called out again from the hamper:

“I see you! I see you!

Don’t sit on the stump

And don’t eat my pie,

But take it to Grandma

And Grandpa, say I!”

The Bear was astonished.

“What a clever girl Masha is!” said he. “She is sitting high up in a tree and she is far away, but she sees all I do and she hears all I say!”

He got to his feet and he walked on even faster than before.

He came to the village and, finding the house where Masha's grandma and grandpa lived, began to bang away at the gate with all his might: KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

" Open the gate! I have brought you something nice from Masha!" he cried.

But the village dogs scented the Bear and rushed out at him from every yard, yelping and barking.

The Bear was frightened, he set down the hamper by the gate and away he ran to the forest without once looking back!

The old man and the old woman came up to the gate and they saw the hamper.

"What is in that hamper?" the old woman asked.

The old man lifted the top, he looked and he could not believe his eyes. For there in the hamper sat Masha, alive and well.

The old man and the old woman were overjoyed. They kissed and embraced Masha and they said she was clever as clever can be, as indeed all our readers will surely agree.